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ABSTRACT

The basic premise of the book, "Demographic Factors in Adult and Continuing Education," (on which this keynote address is based) is that adult and continuing education are irrelevant, immaterial, and inconsequential unless grounded in social reality. The book identifies more than 1 million demographic factors in the 8 Mountain Plains States. This document distills some basic "lessons" from the book: (1) the culture of the states must be viewed in holistic terms; (2) the progress of technology has brought about far-reaching cultural changes, not the least of which is urbanization; (3) broad education is the only cure for racial antipathies; (4) the question is whether one will be content with one's philosophy of what progress is or identify, study, and try to improve it; (5) grades and diplomas are not adequate indicators of proficiency in basic skills; (6) the greatest threat to the future is indifference; and (7) freedom begins where economic necessity ends. Implications of these lessons for teachers, administrators, and policymakers are as follows: the goal of adult and continuing education is social self-realization; a theory of adult learning called the theory of instrumentalism must be developed; a holistic curriculum is conducive to this kind of learning; inherent to the holistic curriculum is a process of teaching as opposed to training; and criteria of maturity rather than academic dogma should be used to assess adult student progress. (YLB)

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MOUNTAIN PLAINS
ADULT EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION

Arizona Idaho Nevada Utah Colorado
Montana New Mexico Wyoming

Demographic Factors in Adult and Continuing Education

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A Keynote Address
Presented During The First General Session
Fiftieth Annual Meeting

Mountain Plains Adult Education Association
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 30, 1992

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DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS IN ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

By

James J. Jelinek
Emeritus Professor of Education
Arizona State University

A Keynote Address
Presented During The First General Session
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INTRODUCTION

By Gary A. Eyre
President
Mountain Plains Adult Education Association
1991–1992

The publication and dissemination of *Demographic Factors in Adult and Continuing Education* by the Board of Directors and membership of the Mountain Plains Adult Education Association (MPAEA) is the result of a two-year effort. This document is a resource guide for teachers, administrators and policymakers. It contains over one million separate pieces of data about the eight mountain plains states.

The reader/user must always ask the question "So what?" when examining demographic information. What implication does a fact or a set of figures and statistics have for me, for my program responsibilities, for the adult student, and how can I use this knowledge to address today's issues and plans for tomorrow?

The professional commitment and tedious research and writing endeavors of Dr. James J. Jelinek and the meticulous editing of his wife Betty resulted in making this publication a reality. Without their dedication to the enhancement of adult learning the demographic factors manuscript would not have been possible. Their work presents the most comprehensive material about people and social reality ever assembled in a single document for an adult and continuing education association.

This year, 1992, is a special year for MPAEA. It is the fiftieth birthday of the Association. At its annual

conference in Salt Lake City, the highlight of the opening general session was the release of the demographic publication and the keynote address by Dr. Jelinek. The audience was spellbound as he succinctly took all of us through the research results and challenged our interests, needs and utilization of the demographic factors of special concern to us. His speech was like a story in which listeners immediately could identify how they would modify adult and continuing education practice and address program change.

I trust you will enjoy reading Dr. Jelinek's keynote address.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS IN ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

By James J. Jelinek
Emeritus Professor of Education
Arizona State University

It is altogether fitting and proper that we should commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of our Association with our book ***Demographic Factors in Adult and Continuing Education.***

Social Realities and the Education of Adults

It is the basic premise of our book that adult and continuing education are irrelevant, immaterial, and inconsequential if they are not grounded in social reality.

Our book is a portrayal of that social reality. It portrays the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, of the states in which we live and do our work. As such it identifies more than one million demographic factors included in four very broad areas, areas the famous historian Dr. Charles A. Beard used to call hotbeds of fire—politics, economics, religion, and sex.

Grappling with such a huge mountain of data could be overwhelming for all of us. Fortunately we have a precedent to help us cope with the tasks at hand.

William James Durant and his wife Ariel devoted forty years of their lives to write ten monumental volumes of *The Story of Civilization*, a comprehensive history stretching from prehistoric times to the eighteenth century.

After the completion of their stupendous achievement the Durants wrote a most illuminating little book entitled *The Lessons of History* identifying what they thought to be lessons learned on the basis of their survey of human history.

Although the monumental volumes of *The Story of Civilization* contained thousands of pages of countless details, the book written by the Durants on *The Lessons of History* is by comparison just a few pages long. The Durants were masters of synthesis.

In principle our task with the thousands of demographic factors we have surveyed is not unlike that of the Durants. Whether or not we have the talent of the Durants, it is our firm responsibility to synthesize the factors into basic lessons of demography in the mountain plains states.

This is, indeed, an awesome undertaking.

Be that as it may, the question is this: Will teachers, administrators, and policymakers in adult and continuing education derive from our survey of demographic factors in the mountain plains states any illumination of our present condition, any guidance for their judgments and policies?

Answering this question makes our task even more difficult than that of the Durants for the reason that it involves not only identifying the lessons of demography,

but also helping teachers, administrators, and policymakers analyze the implications of those lessons for the work they do day by day.

Lessons of Demography

We venture forth, then, first with the following basic "lessons" distilled from our study of the demographic factors in the mountain plains region, recognizing, likewise, that our readers will undoubtedly perceive lessons far beyond what we are identifying as "basic":

Cultural Ecology. ***The first basic lesson of demography learned from our study of the mountain plains states serves as a backdrop for all the other lessons. That lesson is this: The culture of the states must be viewed in holistic terms.***

The whole of a culture is greater than the sum of its parts. There is a certain cultural ecology at work in the human affairs of a state or region. A change in one part of a culture in one way or another has an impact on the other parts of it. The parts are interrelated and interdependent.

Let us examine this idea:

Our data show an unmistakable, relentless shift from an agricultural economy in the late nineteenth century to an industrial economy in the early twentieth century in the various states.

What has been the impact of the agricultural economy of the culture of the mountain plains region in

general and the individual states in particular? What is now the impact of the industrial economy and the information age?

In the pre-harvest empire agricultural state industriousness, regularity, and thrift were profitable, and peace was more victorious than war. Children were an economic asset. Birth control was immoral. On the farm the family was the unit of production under the control of the parents and the seasons. Parental authority was a firm economic base.

Each normal son matured soon in mind and body. As an adolescent he understood the tasks of life as well as he would as an adult. All he needed was land, a plow, and a strong body. He married early, almost as soon as his natural urges dictated.

As for young women chastity was indispensable. Loss of chastity meant unprotected motherhood. Monogamy was a societal demand.

In a word, the impact of agriculture upon the culture of the state was a moral code of continence, early marriage, divorceless monogamy, and multiple maternity.

In an industrial economy the old agricultural moral code dies. Men, women, and children leave home, family, authority, and unity to work as individuals. They are individually paid in factories built to house not persons but machines. The machines multiply and become increasingly more complex.

Economic capacity to support a family comes late in a vocation or profession. Children are no longer an economic asset. Marriage is delayed. Premarital continence

is increasingly more difficult to maintain. While the city offers discouragement to marriage, it provides every stimulus and facility for sex. Women, to use the popular term, are "emancipated." That is to say, they, like men, are industrialized. Contraceptives enable them to separate sexual intercourse from pregnancy.

The authority of parents loses its economic base through individualism in industry. Rebellious youth are no longer constrained by the surveillance of the village. Youth hide their deviant behavior in the protective anonymity of the city crowd.

Technology in industry raises its authority over all else. Things are in the saddle and ride people. Mechanization of economic production suggests mechanistic materialistic philosophy. As we see in the mountain plains states even demands for artifacts of war are rationalized on the grounds that they stimulate economic growth.

The basic lesson in all of this is one of cultural ecology—a change in one part of the culture in one way or another has an impact on the other parts of it.

Urbanization. ***Our second basic lesson of demography is on Urbanization.***

In terms, then, of the data at hand in the mountain plains states, the progress of technology has brought about far reaching cultural changes that have created crucial social problems, not the least of which is the concentration of many people into metropolitan centers. This is especially true in Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada with single areas of concentration. Even in states that are the least metropolitan in the mountain plains region the growth rates of population centers range from 40 to 90 percent.

Our data show cities are characterized by a high incidence of crime, suicide, and mental breakdowns—disorders caused by disorganization of life in communities and the breakdown of primary group relationships.

Social action is now attained for the most part, not by consensual agreement in communities, but by powerful special interest groups. Important societal concerns—such as, for example, desegregation, affirmative action, legislative reapportionment, legalized abortion, to mention a few—have not been won by consensual agreement—not by Congress, not by state legislators, not at the polls—but in the courts.

Regardless of our individual views on these issues it is important to note a critical point. In a democracy all those individuals affected by a policy must share in shaping it. Otherwise chaos results, as we are now seeing day by day in the workplace, in our schools, in our churches, and in our communities.

The prevailing anxiety is centered on urban crime, declining educational standards, homeless people, unaffordable housing, and drug pushers in the shadows of urban buildings. The feeling is epidemic that daily life is getting more squalid, more expensive, and more dangerous.

Ethnicity. ***Our third basic lesson of demography is on Ethnicity.***

Our data show the mountain plains states have greater ethnic diversity than any other region in the nation, and they are projected to have even greater diversity in the future. Racial antipathies are generated by differences of acquired culture—of language, dress, habits, morals, or religion.

The lesson is this: There is no cure for such antipathies except broad education.

Civilization is a cooperative product to which all groups of peoples have contributed. It is our common heritage and our common debt. The mature, educated person reveals himself by treating every man and woman as a representative of one of those creative and contributory groups.

Progress. ***Our fourth basic lesson of demography is on Progress.***

As nowhere else in the nation there is a clash of ideologies in the mountain plains states that is approaching huge proportions. The clash centers on the concept of progress as expostulated by what we call individualists on the one hand and by communitarians on the other.

Individualists argue that human wants, being insatiable, require an indefinite expansion of productive forces necessary to satisfy them. Insatiable desire, formerly condemned as a source of frustration, unhappiness, and spiritual instability, is seen as a powerful stimulus to economic growth—to improvements in production and a general increase in wealth.

Communitarians, on the other hand, state that now that we understand the environmental limits of economic growth, we need to subject the idea of "progress" to searching criticism. Communitarians condemn the boundless appetite for more and better goods as so-called "improvements" and progress.

So, individualists hope to unleash wealth-creating desire; communitarians argue that overweening desire

invites retribution—the corrective, compensatory force of nemesis.

Some examples of so-called progress, especially economic progress, come to mind:

Not unlike the other states of the mountain plains region, Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah are having a basic issue to resolve in meeting the demands of what is ambiguously called progress.

Petroleum, first produced in Wyoming in the 1880s, trona, discovered in 1938, and uranium discovered in 1918, were principal economic entities until coal exploitation and power generation have gained prominence in recent decades. Now, however, Wyoming residents are expressing serious concern over industry's destruction of the state's environmental assets, especially its annihilation of water resources.

To enhance their economic progress Colorado and Wyoming have Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles along Interstate 25 designed to destroy whole countries half a world away, and now residents of the region are living in ghastly fear of those nuclear warheads.

To enhance its economic progress the state of Utah has enough poison gas within its borders to kill every man, woman, and child on the face of the earth, not once, but three times, for what the Pentagon calls its overkill capability. The tanks that hold the poison gas are now disintegrating and no one knows how to neutralize the gas.

With respect to the issue of so-called progress, it is important to note that what is true of Wyoming, Colorado,

and Utah is also true in principle for Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and New Mexico.

Our data show there are 47,000 toxic, radioactive waste sites in America, and the Mountain Plains states have more than any other region in the country. Our data also show all the main rivers in our beautiful states are polluted.

What, indeed, are the criteria of progress?

The lesson is this: Philosophy is inherently criticism. Its ultimate value is that it continuously provides means for the criticism of values—whether of beliefs, institutions, actions, or products—that are found in all aspects of experience.

It is thus not a question of philosophy or no philosophy. Each person does have a philosophy. Denial simply means one will not look at it. The question becomes one of whether a person will be content with a philosophy he just happens to have or whether he will identify it, study it, and try to improve it.

Education. ***Our fifth basic lesson of demography is on Education.***

Our data show that of the 15,402,000 inhabitants 18 years of age and older in the mountain plains states, 11,596,114 have high school diplomas, and 2,879,295 have college degrees. This gives one of our states the distinction of being the so-called "highest educated state in the nation," it gives four of our states the distinction of being well above average in the nation, and it gives the whole mountain plains region the distinction of being among the best educated regions in the country.

Yet, according to the National Center for Human Resources, 8,963,964 inhabitants in the region do not possess the level of basic skills in reading, writing, and computing required of individuals to cope in the modern socio-economic world.

The lesson is this: Grades and diplomas are not adequate indicators of proficiency in basic skills in the mountain plains states.

Politics. ***Our sixth basic lesson of demography is on Politics.***

Our data show fewer than one-half of those residents of voting age in the mountain plains states cast votes in state and national elections.

The anomaly is that this condition exists in a region beset with issues and problems of crime, ethnicity, poverty, disease, and drugs, to name a few.

The lesson is this: In the cold war era we believed the greatest threat to our future was from aggression. The greatest threat to our future is not from aggression but from indifference; cultures like ours perish not from the outside but from the inside; not in the raucous light of confrontation, but in the quiet darkness of apathy.

Poverty. ***Our seventh basic lesson of demography is on Poverty.***

One in seven inhabitants in the mountain plains region now lives in a condition of poverty. According to the U. S. Bureau of the Census, the percentage of people below the government's poverty line include Arizona 13.7 percent, Colorado 13.7 percent, Idaho 14.9 percent, Montana 16.3

percent, Nevada 9.8 percent, New Mexico 20.9 percent, Utah 8.2 percent, and Wyoming 11 percent.

The data show a high positive correlation between unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and illiteracy and social unrest, social unrest made evident by crimes, riots, and beatings.

One-fifth of the region's children are poor. The high poverty rates mean people lose their homes and they succumb to health problems and the strain of trying to make ends meet.

The lesson is this: Freedom begins where economic necessity ends

Implications for Adult and Continuing Education

Doubtless there are many, many more lessons to be derived from the mountain of demographic data we have presented, but for the lessons we have derived thus far a basic question remains:

What are the implications of these lessons for teachers, administrators, and policymakers in adult and continuing education in the mountain plains states?

Again we venture forth in an awesome undertaking:

Goals. ***Our first implication concerns Goals.***

Two basic concerns are implicit in our analysis thus far:

First, in holistic perspective, demographic factors point to the problems adult and continuing education in a democracy must be instrumental in helping to solve.

Second, in holistic perspective, demographic factors are also basic to an understanding of the interests, problems, and needs of students.

In a word, the purpose of adult and continuing education is social-self realization.

Learning. ***Our second implication concerns Learning.***

One of the important implications of our study of demographic factors is that we must develop a theory of adult learning based upon principles inherent in the real world. We call such a theory the theory of Instrumentalism.

According to this theory an individual is always a part of an environment. Within that environment he is self-directive, self-regulative. If anything occurs within the person or within his environment to upset his dynamic equilibrium the person responds to that upset factor. His responses **continue** and they **vary** until his dynamic equilibrium is restored. This process is called experience. We do not learn simply by doing; we learn by experience.

In this sense the newly contrived response brings a change, an increment, to the structure of the person himself. He is not now exactly the same person he was before he contrived the response that eliminated the upset of his dynamic equilibrium.

Thus learning becomes a matter of increment, of growth, and teaching becomes a matter of assisting

students to develop behaviors that are instrumental in meeting the demands of their needs.

In this way teaching involves diagnosis, implementation, and evaluation. *Demographic Factors in Adult and Continuing Education* is a resource guide for teachers to use in this professional undertaking.

Curriculum. ***Our third implication concerns Curriculum.***

To be conducive to the kind of learning we have identified, a curriculum needs to have its basic orientation in the common needs, problems, and interests of learners, even when it draws heavily upon organized subject matter.

Subject matter from all pertinent fields is drawn upon to illuminate, clarify, and provide data for solving persistent common problems of living. No preconceived bodies of subject matter are set up to be covered. If particular subject matter is needed to achieve the goals set up, it will come in; otherwise it is left out.

In a word, this curriculum postulates a dramatic contrast with the predetermined curriculum pattern especially because the predetermined curriculum pattern violates the dynamic nature of adult learning.

We call this curriculum the Holistic Curriculum, holistic meaning a whole with interrelated, interdependent parts.

Teaching. ***Our fourth implication concerns Teaching.***

Inherent in the Holistic Curriculum we have identified is a process of teaching as opposed to training.

The main point of training is that artificial stimuli can become incorporated into the makeup of a person, thus creating the "conditioned response."

By way of training a person can be conditioned to perform even gross behaviors when they are accompanied by approval, words of approbation, grades, citations, medals, or praise. In each case the artificial stimulus is so closely tied to the satisfaction of a particular want that the response to the stimulus is felt to be "natural."

Yet what seems natural turns out to be grossly "unnatural." In an "arrestment paradox," for example, behaviors that have predominantly unfavorable consequences persist over a period of months, years, or even a lifetime.

The fact of the matter is that the arrestment paradox is caused by the conditioning, the training process, itself.

The consequences of this mode are identifiable:

The person becomes the prey of anyone who conditions him.

The person becomes anti-intellectual.

The person relinquishes responsibility for his own actions.

The person turns to violence when rewards are withheld.

The person is law-abiding only when he is observed.

A basic assumption of trainers is that they know with certitude the behaviors trainees will need to perform

in the future. Present-day trainers fail to realize that trainers in the past indoctrinated trainees for a future that never came to pass. It is for this reason that many adults are in a state of arrestment, because the behaviors inherent in their indoctrination are not adequate to meet the contingencies of the world in which they now live.

By way of contrast, the person who is a Teacher/ Learner is inner, rather than outer, directed.

He invokes modes of inquiring, hypothesizing, problem-solving, and reconstructing experience. Growth for him begets more growth. Growth for him is a matter of a person's rethinking an experience thus facing each subsequent situation a different person.

The Teacher/Learner has clear ideas about what is and what is not teaching,

- For the Teacher/Learner teaching adult students is not a matter of doing things **to** them; it is rather a matter of doing things **with** them.

- Discipline for the Teacher/Learner is not a matter of getting a person to do what he does not want to do; it is rather the pursuit of a goal, no matter what the deterrents to its attainment, be they hardship, difficulty, confusion, distraction, obstacle, handicap, or complacence.

- Curriculum for him is not a body of knowledge that is handed down so that learning is basically acquisition and acceptance on the basis of authority; it is rather social-self realization for the learner who is a self-discovering,

self-expressing, self-fulfilling, prehensive person who is never an isolated, but a social self.

- Intelligence for the Teacher/Learner is not a preordained, conditioned response; it is rather behavior that is guided by an anticipation of consequences—behavior that can be reconstructed, if need be, in the light of consequences.

Evaluation. ***Our fifth implication concerns Evaluation, the last of our professional triad.***

Contrary to what many believe, the purpose of adult education is not to pass a criterion referenced test or a norm referenced test. Tests are designed to determine whether those being tested will be capable of performing given tasks at some future time.

But adult education is not a mere preparation for life at some future time. It is life. Evaluation in adult education involves ongoing observation and is expressed in behavioral terms, in explanatory terms, in the form of developmental profiles.

Developmental profiles, observational analyses, rather than grades or other glittering generalities, are meaningful to teachers, counselors, adult students, employers, and the like. They facilitate diagnoses and implementations of courses of action to be taken on the basis of those diagnoses.

Holism. ***Each implication is important in its own right, but we must always remember the whole of adult and continuing education is greater than the sum of its parts:***

When we in adult education neglect taking a holistic view of our students, when we neglect taking a holistic view of ourselves, when we neglect taking a holistic view of the society in which we live, we do crazy things, although they do not seem that way at the time we do them.

For example:

Those who suffer spiritually, we train to do mundane things.

Those who see no meaning in the days of their lives, we train to do practical things.

Those to whom sameness is typical, we train to do the ordinary.

Those who live isolated lives we train to do isolated skills.

In adult education this compartmentalization becomes evident in training rather than eaching.

The deterministic paradigm of traning, of stimulus-response, involves the process of dehumanization that comes from the study of animals—rats, monkeys, pigeons, dogs.

Thus, training is a reactive model teaching involves a proactive model.

Training uses the outside-in approach; teaching involves the inside-in approach.

Training involves extrinsic motivation; teaching involves intrinsic motivation.

Training is a process of dehumanization; teaching is a process of humanization.

Not until basic skills are taught as means to certain ends—as means to the solution of problems, as means to the fulfillment of interests, as means to the satisfaction of needs—will adult education begin to prepare students for the contingencies of a dynamic present and a dynamic future.

When basic skills are thusly taught we will begin assessing adult student progress by way of criteria of maturity rather than academic dogma.

These criteria might be something like this:

Is the student gaining increasingly more effective intelligence—that is to say, is he behaving more and more in terms of an anticipation of consequences?

Is the student becoming increasingly more articulate, especially in expressing personal and social problems and solutions to those problems?

Is the student becoming increasingly more responsible?

Is the student becoming increasingly more empathetic?

Is the student becoming increasingly more philosophical—that is to say, is he developing wholes of meaning, sensing relationships between people, and between people and things?

Criteria such as these will help us to develop a holistic view of our adult students.

Criteria such as these might even help us to develop a holistic view of ourselves and the society in which we live.

Conclusion

In closing, let us consider with just a very few brief words a simple but profound strategy:

The conclusions we come to, the emotions we harbor, and the passions that sway us are of much less significance than the basic assumptions upon which they are all founded. Some of our friends and adversaries in and out of adult and continuing education will make their assumptions quite evident when they dispute and resist the approaches inherent in our analysis. During those highly charged emotional experiences let us stand together. Let us be encouraged by this thought:

Our dreams are within our reach.

Within our reach lies every path we ever
dream of taking.

Within our power lies every step we ever
dream of making.

Within our sight lies every joy we ever
dream of seeing.

Within ourselves lies everything we ever
dream of being.

Each day is important for so many reasons—

The hope it inspires and the promise it holds.

And so may our days together bring new
dreams to believe in—

Dreams that grow brighter as each day unfolds.

Jostens Learning compliments the Mountain Plains Adult Education Association membership for their acuity in undertaking the publication of Demographic Factors in Adult and Continuing Education, compiled for the states of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming.

This two year effort is recognized as the most comprehensive regional adult and continuing education demographic resource document ever published.

Jostens Learning also congratulates Dr. James J. Jelinek for his untiring work, research and leadership in making this publication possible, and feels privileged to reproduce the keynote address he presented to the participants of the MPAEA 50th Anniversary Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, April 30, 1992.

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